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Beauty at a price: Another look at personal care products

Carol Meyer | Apr. 26, 2011 Eco Catholic

Movie stars with flawless complexions, populating magazine pages and TV ads, lure the unsuspecting into buying numerous beauty products that promise miracles. The hope is that the creams, lotions, scents, and make-up will compensate for the Creator?s flaw in making them lacking and imperfect.

Most of us, women and men alike, succumb to this advertising pressure without a thought about whether these endless products are necessary or good for us and the Earth.

This issue really hit home to me when a health practitioner once asked me, ?Aside from the bad taste, would you be willing to ingest these products that you put on your body?? I was repulsed, instinctively knowing they were not made from natural, harmless food sources

Most of us don?t realize that whatever is put on our skin is fully absorbed into our bodies. It ends up in our blood stream, cells, and organs, and eventually in the larger ecosystems, as a benign or malign presence.

As stewards of our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit and of the Earth as the numinous home of God, we would do well to re-evaluate our choices in regard to these personal products. So let?s look beneath the surface a little.

Most conventional body products -- shampoo, sun screen, lotion, mouthwash, deodorant, toothpaste, soap, cosmetics, etc. -- all contain hundreds of toxins and poisons of various kinds. Here?s a list of some of them: fluoride, propylene glycol, lead, aluminum, sodium lauryl sulfate, formaldehyde, mineral oil, paraffin, and vinyl chloride.

According to the Environmental Working Group, adults use an average of nine personal care products each day (teens even more), thereby inviting more than 126 toxic chemicals into their bodies.

I could go on and on about the dangers, the cancer and birth defects these malignant chemicals contribute to. But the bottom line is -- do not use any of these conventional personal care products! It?s not worth the harm to allow the 75,000 chemicals licensed for use in the United States into your bodily or planetary home.

So what are we to do? In many cases, do without entirely. Stop believing the advertising that tries to convince you that you lacking in some way. Know your worth is inherent and can?t be enhanced by any externals. Why do you need to use deodorant, for instance? It?s natural, healthy, and necessary for the body to perspire. I never use a deodorant and still have friends. But if you think you need something, a deodorant stone works very well.

Secondly, for things that are a necessity, like shampoo, get something organic and natural from an alternative source, such as a health food store or online. Then do a little research and see if you can trust the company or what is in their products. Read labels and do a bit of self-education via books, the internet or health advisors. And don?t trust conventional products just because companies have wised up enough to label their fraudulent products with fancy, healthy-sounding words like ?natural? or ?green.?

If you are zealous about this and so inclined, you can make some of your own products using herbs, foods, and other natural items. The inside of a banana peel, for instance, makes a good hand moisturizer. Aloe Vera gel is an astringent for oily skin. Nature has given us what we need.

Many personal care products have been tested on animals, so be sure to read the labels and make sure they say something like, ?Cruelty-free? or ?Not tested on animals.?

A final thought -- we wonder why our lives and interactions are so toxic in general. Television constantly portrays people in conflicted relationships, children and teens are terribly cruel to each other, politics are rife with smear campaigns, and kindness and decency seem like rare commodities. Maybe it?s because all the poisons we absorb in our bodies are also subtly poisoning our minds and spirits.

We live in an interconnected universe, so everything we do, physically and spiritually, eventually comes back to us. It?s imperative that we humans stop making contaminants, and one way to bring this about is to boycott products made with them. So go green in your personal care products and your light will shine from within, giving you a beauty no toxic products ever could.

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